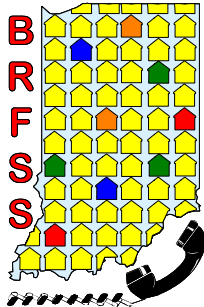


Indiana BRFSS Newsletter



Indiana State Department of Health
Epidemiology Resource Center
Data Analysis

Physical Activity

Adults who participate in physical activity on a regular basis, especially at moderate or vigorous intensity levels, derive many health benefits. Physical activity can lower the risk of developing coronary heart disease, stroke, Type 2 (non-insulin dependent) diabetes, high blood pressure, and colon cancer by 30-50% (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996). In addition, active people have lower premature death rates than people who are the least active. The data on the physical activity levels of Indiana adults for this report were obtained from the 2003 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey.

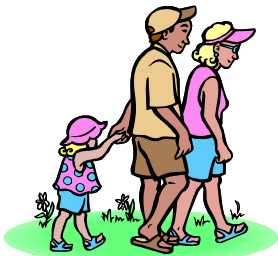


Many health conditions and behaviors are not reportable; hence, prevalence data must be obtained from another source. The BRFSS is an annual random digit-dial telephone survey of adults ages 18 years and older. The survey is conducted through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). All 50 states and the District of Columbia participate.

The BRFSS relies on self-reported data. This type of survey has certain limitations that should be understood when interpreting the data. Many times, respondents have the tendency to underreport some behaviors that may be considered socially unacceptable (e.g., smoking, heavy alcohol use). Conversely, respondents may overreport behaviors that are desirable (e.g., physical activity, nutrition).



Respondents were asked if they had engaged in any physical activity in the past month other than their regular job. Additional questions gathered information on whether the recommendations for vigorous or moderate physical activity were met. Information from the questions also determined if respondents had not engaged in any moderate or vigorous physical activity.

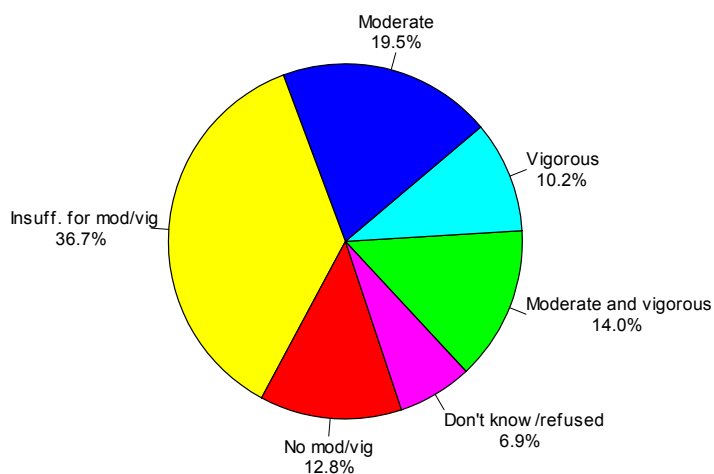


Moderate physical activity is defined as activity causing small increases in breathing or heart rate and done for 30 minutes per day for five or more days per week. Examples include walking two miles in 30 minutes or raking leaves for 30 minutes. Vigorous physical activity causes large increases in breathing or heart rate and is done for at least 20 minutes per day for at least three days per week. Examples include jogging and running. Respondents can meet recommendations for either vigorous, moderate, or both physical activity categories.

Respondents who report some moderate or vigorous activity, but less than described above, are defined as having insufficient activity to meet the guidelines for vigorous or moderate activity. Fifty percent of respondents either had insufficient activity to meet the recommendations or did not have any moderate or vigorous activity (see Figure 1).



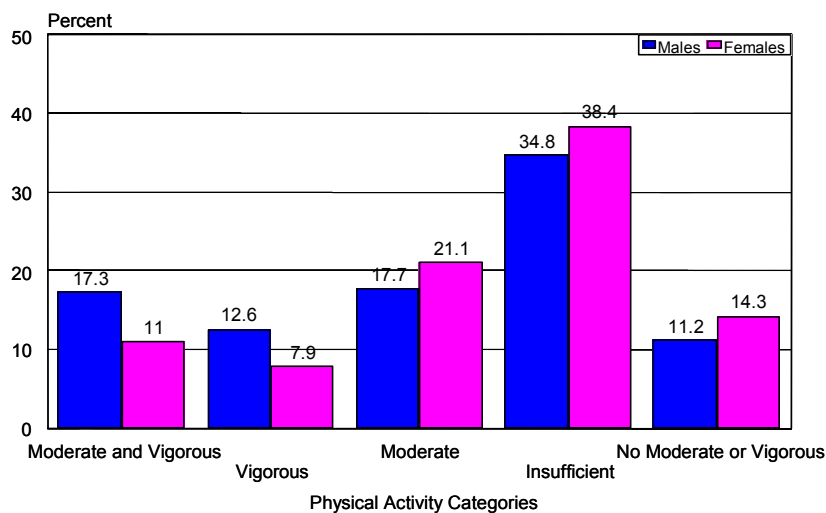
Figure 1
Overall Physical Activity Categories
Indiana 2003



Source: Indiana BRFSS

Respondents who met the recommendations for both vigorous and moderate physical activity were more likely to be male than female. The results were similar for meeting the recommendations for vigorous physical activity. Females were slightly more likely than males to meet recommendations for moderate physical activity. Females were also slightly more likely than males to have insufficient physical activity to meet the recommendations for vigorous and moderate or to have no vigorous or moderate activity (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Physical Activity Categories by Sex

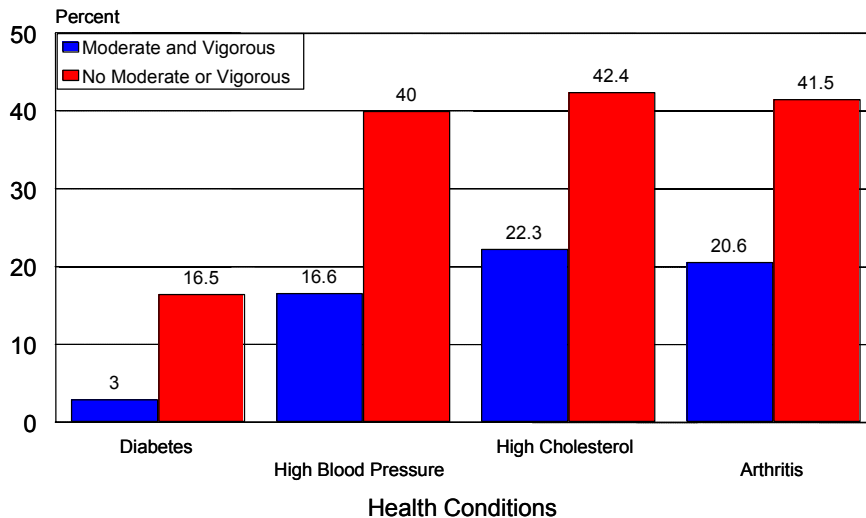


Source: Indiana BRFSS Survey, 2003

Respondents who reported higher levels of physical activity reported a lower prevalence of chronic diseases and unhealthy conditions. Respondents who met both moderate and vigorous physical activity recommendations reported a lower prevalence of diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and arthritis than respondents with no moderate or vigorous physical activity (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Physical Activity Categories by Reported Health Conditions

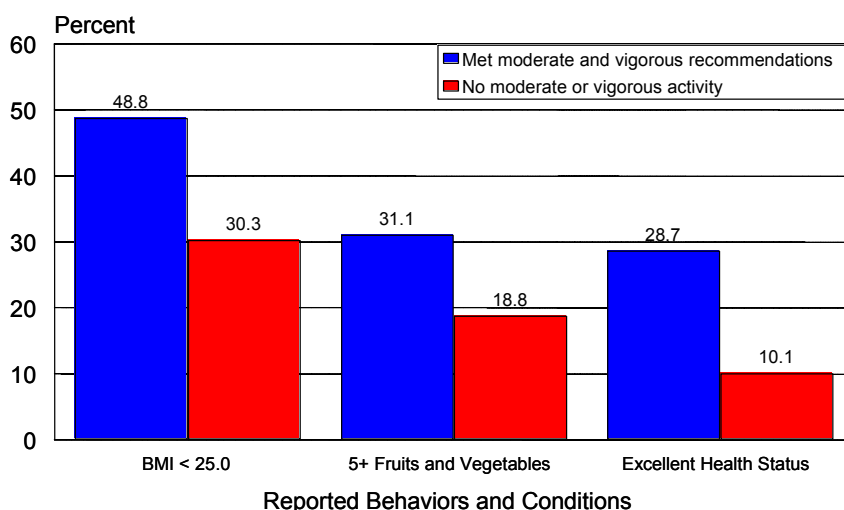


Source: Indiana BRFSS Survey, 2003

day and were much more likely to report excellent health status than those without moderate and vigorous activity (see Figure 4). There was little difference in current smoking between respondents who reported the highest level of activities and those who reported no moderate or vigorous activity (28.3% vs. 23.9%, respectively).

Figure 4

Physical Activity Categories by Healthy Behaviors/Conditions



Source: Indiana BRFSS Survey, 2003

Respondents who reported the highest level of activities were more likely to engage in other healthy behaviors than respondents who reported no moderate or vigorous activity. Respondents who met the recommendations for moderate and vigorous physical activity had a much lower prevalence of obesity. A higher percentage of respondents who met the recommendations for moderate and vigorous activity had a body mass index (BMI) of less than 25 (not overweight or obese). Respondents with moderate and vigorous physical activity were much more likely to consume five or more fruits and vegetables per

day and were much more likely to report excellent health status than those without moderate and vigorous activity (see Figure 4). It is never too late to start an active lifestyle. Regardless of age or current activity level, research shows that starting a more active lifestyle through regular, moderate-intensity activity can make people healthier and improve their quality of life.

For additional information on physical activities, visit the Governor's Council for Physical Fitness and Sports at <http://www.in.gov/isdh/programs/GovernorsCouncil/index.htm>.

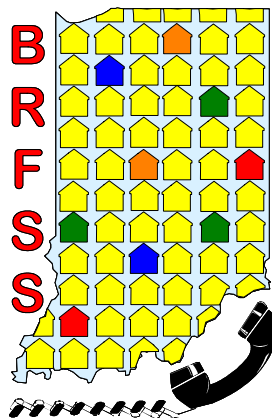




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*The Indiana BRFSS
Newsletter is published by
the Indiana State
Department of Health to
provide surveillance
information to Indiana
health professionals and
to the public health
community.*

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Acknowledgments

The Epidemiology Resource Center gratefully acknowledges the efforts of the residents of the State of Indiana who took the time to respond to the questions asked in the telephone interviews conducted for this survey.

A special acknowledgment is also extended to the staff of Clearwater Research, Inc., who committed themselves to collecting the BRFSS data in an accurate and professional manner.

The Indiana BRFSS is completed through a cooperative agreement between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Indiana State Department of Health.

This publication was supported by cooperative agreement number U58/CCU522814-02 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

